

REMARKS

Claims 1-13, 15 and 16 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1 and 3-12 are amended and claim 16 is added. Support for amended claims 1 and 13 may be found in the original specification at, for example, page 16, lines 2-13 and page 23, lines 28-30. Support for new claim 16 may be found in the original specification at, for example, original claim 3. Claims 3-12 are amended to depend from claim 1 or 16, and/or to correct antecedent basis. No new matter is added.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

Claim 13 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,705,139 ("Gahlau"). Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Gahlau fails to teach or suggest a sound-absorbing unit including a partition plate having a plurality of recesses formed in a first side thereof and wherein the lower portions of the recesses are at least partially separated from a support base by an air gap (Δ), as recited in claim 13.

Gahlau discloses a sound insulator part including cells 1 (alleged recesses) encased by a foil 2 that is embedded in a foam material 3 between a carpet 5 and a panel 8 (see column 4, lines 46-49). However, as shown in FIG. 2, foam material 3 encompasses the entire space between carpet 5 and panel 8 that surrounds cells 1. Nowhere does Gahlua disclose an air gap (Δ) between cells 1 (alleged recesses) and panel 8. As such, Gahlua fails to teach or suggest each and every claim feature.

For at least the foregoing reasons, claim 13 is patentable over the applied reference. Thus, withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) is respectfully requested.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claim 15 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Gahlua.

Claims 1 and 2 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,134,014 ("Zaima") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,186,2701 ("Roller")

Claims 3-7 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Zaima in view of JP 11-161282 ("JP 282").

Claims 8 and 10-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Zaima in view of JP 282, further in view of Roller.

Each of these rejections is respectfully traversed.

None of the applied references, alone or in combination, teach or suggest a sound-absorbing structure including a corrugated partition plate interposed between a support base and a sound-absorbing material, the corrugated partition plate having upper antinode portions opposed to the sound-absorbing material and lower antinode portions opposed to the support base, wherein the lower antinode portions of the corrugated partition plate are at least partially separated from the support base by an air gap (Δ), as recited in claim 1.

Zaima discloses a second side of a corrugated core 12 (alleged corrugated partition plate) covered by a foam layer 18 (see column 4, lines 53-55, and FIG. 5). However, as shown in FIG. 1, foam layer 18 separates corrugated core 12 (alleged corrugated partition plate) from a covering 11 (position of alleged support base). Zaima makes no mention of an air gap between corrugated core 12 (alleged corrugated partition plate) and a support base, nor is an air gap shown in FIG. 12. To the contrary, foam layer 18 encompasses the entire space between corrugated core 12 (alleged corrugated partition plate) and a covering 11 (position of alleged support base). Thus, nowhere does Zaima teach or suggest a sound-absorbing structure including a corrugated partition plate interposed between a support base and a sound-absorbing material, the corrugated partition plate having upper antinode portions opposed to the sound-absorbing material and lower antinode portions opposed to the support

base, wherein the lower antinode portions of the corrugated partition plate are at least partially separated from the support base by an air gap (Δ), as required in claim 1.

Further, none of Gahlau, Roller, JP 282 cure the deficiencies of Zaima in disclosing or rendering obvious the features of independent claim 1.

With respect to the rejection of claims 3-12, claims 3-12 now depend from claim 1. Thus, claims 3-12 are considered in condition for allowance for at least their dependency from allowable claim 1.

For at least the foregoing reasons, claim 1, and dependent claims thereof, are patentable over the applied reference. Thus, withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-13, 15 and 16 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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